1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 195-A]

[361] built, though the basic structure is expected to [342] last for the duration of the camp.

[312] In the choice of a situation for a camp, the main considerations are the close proximity of game and fruit, but a *sine qua non* is the presence of drinking water within 50 yards. Other considerations are the absence overhead of dead branches or leaning trees which might fall on the camp in the violent windstorms that occur frequently in the forest; also, a slight slope to the ground to prevent the camp from becoming swamped during rains.

[514] Camps are moved every month or two because in that time game will have been scared away and local vegetation (fruits, fungi, and other vegetable foods) used up, and also (Putnam, 1948) because, as the Pygmies relieve themselves only a short distance from the camp, it will in that time become extremely malodorous and uncomfortable even by Pygmy standards.

HABITATIONS

[592] A camp consists of one hut per family. The [342] huts are built by the women, in just the same [462] shape and manner as by all Ituri Mbuti, in a [184] circle with doors facing toward the center. [346] There are no bachelor huts or huts for unmarried girls or widows, and no ritual structures. The relation of the huts to one another in the

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.200-B]

nkusa vine into cord, mainly used for net repairing, are also everyday occupations. The net hunters use vine much more widely than the archers who use it for basketry rather than cordage. Putnam also mentions the use of certain types of vine that give water. *Njelani* is a long vine used for making children's swings and the high swings used by young men mainly during the honey season.

Body Decoration

Body decoration and mutilation as described in the Putnam material is similar to that recounted by Schebesta, except that in the painting of designs on the body Anne Putnam mentions the use of *kangay*, a black dye obtained from the juice of the gardenia fruit (Fig. 30a). This is applied with a small twig. Use of red and white is confined to ceremonial occasions. A variety of hats and headdresses is used by the net hunters, also bracelets, necklaces, combs, and lip plugs. All of these may be made by the Mbuti, though often in imitation of village artifacts (Fig. 30).

2: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

132 Where in the villages, and in the plantations that surround them, the midday temperatures soar well into the nineties, and the ground is covered with a dry, choking dust that quickly turns to mud, in the shade of the forest the world is cool and fresh, with only rare places, such as along river banks or at salt licks, where sunlight reaches the
136 ground without first being filtered through a leafy roof. Also from the point of view of comfort, and of health, where village conditions lead to gatherings of flies and mosquitoes, these disease bearers are seldom if ever seen in the depths of the forest, except at such sites as are
[186] easily avoided. The Mbuti frequently compare their lot, in these respects, with that of the villagers, who in turn grudgingly admit to some advantages of forest life.

• 312 Another important contrast between forest and village life is in the water supply. The forest is interlaced with innumerable streams, any of which can be drunk from with impunity. A hunting camp is always located near a stream, but never stays in the one vicinity long enough to foul the water. A village remains in the same location, however, for three years or so, and the local water supply invariably becomes polluted. The villagers have some resistance to infection, but the Mbuti often have none and quickly become sick if they stay too long in a village.

136 But it is with regard to food even more than shelter or water that
262 the forest seems to favor the Mbuti. Throughout the year, without fail, there is an abundant supply of game and of vegetable foods. There are half a dozen different kinds of antelope that are particularly abundant, apart from supplementary sources of meat such as birds,
[137] monkeys, chimpanzees, and divers grubs and insects. The forest also supplies a number of edible roots, notably the sweet *itaba*, and many different varieties of mushrooms, nuts, berries and fruits. All the latter may vary in abundance the one from the other, according to the time of year, but throughout the year at any one time there will be an ample supply, in both quantity and variety.

262 The only truly seasonal food in the forest economy of the Mbuti is honey, and it is of major importance in the diet. It is also of major
[621] importance as a focal point in the constant process of fission and fusion that characterizes Mbuti society.

778 The apparent benevolence of the forest towards the Mbuti extends still further. The materials for the making of shelter, clothing, and all other necessary items of material culture are all to hand at a mo-
[313] ment's notice. Firewood, equally, is everywhere in abundance. It is

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

are contradicted every day without necessarily causing any mention, but in the event of anything more serious happening later, the earlier incidents will be recalled and made into an issue that successfully embroils, ultimately, the entire camp.

But more curious than this slight emphasis on normal, or mildly abnormal and trivial patterns is the lack of emphasis at times where one would have thought the occasion to be of major concern to the band. Birth and marriage, for instance, provoke little comment, and concern primarily the nuclear families and not the band. The relationship between these particular attitudes and the nonlineal and fluid composition of the band is plain. The constant movement of families from one band to another, alone, opens up different and important avenues for recruitment that has the advantage of being selective.

With this in mind, let us look first at the daily life of the Mbuti, briefly, for it is of little structural significance, then at the life cycle.

Among both net-hunters and archers five days out of seven are likely to include some hunting. Even though it would be possible for the Mbuti to kill a surplus of game and dry the meat and store it for their own future use, as indeed they do for the benefit of the villagers, such measures are no more to their taste than to their advantage. On a hunting day the family rises at dawn, the mother and her older daughters who are at the age of puberty go to the stream to wash themselves and bring back water for drinking and cooking. The menfolk go to a different part of the stream, and generally slightly later. The older men might be excessively lazy and use the water brought back for drinking as bath water.

While the women cook the light morning meal and set food aside for taking with them on the hunt, the men shake out and inspect their nets, bows and arrows, their sons helping them or simply looking on. If the forest is dry, the hunt may start leaving within an hour of dawn, otherwise it may not leave until midday. Usually it sets off about two hours after sunrise and may return anytime between midday and dusk. There is no particular order for leaving the camp, but the youths usually go ahead, and not far away they light a fire at the base of a small tree, as an invocation to the forest for a good hunt. Men and women alike stop by the fire on their way, but with no ceremony. It does serve, however, as a place for a more cordial exchange of greetings than generally takes place in the still sleepy camp.

Back in the camp some old grandparents, or maybe only a handful

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

In the middle
of the day the sun found its way through the leaves and struck this bank, and the women liked to wade out to it and do their washing there. When the river was as low as this you could wade all the way across, if you knew where to step, but at other times a huge fallen tree was used as a bridge.

On the far side the ground rose sharply, and though at first the forest was still open and friendly, as soon as you reached the top of the rise it became thick and closed in around you, and the only paths were those made by animals, narrow and twisting.

Kenge showed me all this with his chest puffed up with pride. He told me I could drink water from any of the streams or from the Lelo itself; it was not like living in the village where both the food and water were dirty. He showed where the women would bathe, and warned me to keep upstream of the shingle bar, so as not to offend them. The other youths had already stripped naked and were splashing in the water, unashamed, though in deference to an over-clad Westerner they held their hands in front of them when they turned to face me.

We went back to the campsite and Kenge started clearing the ground. Very shortly afterward three of the great hunters arrived— Njobo, the killer of elephants; Masisi, the proud father; and Manyalibo, the gruff, good-humored conservative. They shouted a greeting as they came into the clearing, and looking around they threw down their hunting nets where they thought they would like to have their houses built. Njobo chose to be just to the south of the hillock; Manyalibo and Masisi, good cousins that they were, put their nets down beside each other, opposite. Then almost immediately they disappeared into the forest, each in a different direction, each with bow and arrows. In less than fifteen minutes Kenge, who had been examining the tracks of a huge buffalo that had passed by the night before, suddenly stood still and motioned me to be quiet. With his hands he mimed an antelope running and pointed into the forest behind Manyalibo's chosen site.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

361 camp to hear his stories. But none of his stories fascinated the Pyg-
361 mies as much as those of the model Pygmy villages we had passed
177 on our way home. He was made to repeat these accounts over and over again, giving every detail. While the younger men and women laughed until they could laugh no more at Kenge's description of the distribution of beans for planting, and how most of them ended up in the cooking pot, the older people were less amused. "But are they actually living in those villages?" they asked. And when Kenge answered that some of them were, the next question was "What if there is no game nearby?" Kenge could only tell them what the administrator had said: "You are welcome to hunt so long as you continue to look after the plantations." Everyone knew that to be impossible. Hunting is a full-time occupation, and it could lead a group away for months on end. It called for the co-operation of men, women and children. Who was to stay to look after the fields?

Other questions brought equally unsatisfactory answers, even so far as the younger people were concerned. There were no trees in the "model" villages—every last one had been cut down, exposing the huts to the full heat of the sun. The Pygmies were to be supplied with free seeds to plant, but they would be expected to produce a definite yield, and they knew that villagers who failed to come up to the mark were fined, and if they were unable to pay their fines they
• [317] went to jail. Every village had been placed near a supply of fresh water, tested by the administrator himself (by looking at it—he was horrified when I drank some). But the Pygmies knew that however clean it might be to start with, it would soon be polluted; and in any case there was no guarantee that it would continue throughout the year.

361 Far from being "liberated" from the villagers, the Pygmies felt
829 that in these model plantations they would be in greater danger than
177 ever. In the forest they knew that they were safe, because the forest was theirs, but once out in the open they were subject to all the evil

133 rolling hills are separated by perennial streams never more than a few miles
• [312] apart. A pygmy can find water almost anywhere within a hundred yards.

Negro-pygmy Relations

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This forest is inhabited by two kinds of people, Negroes and pygmies, who maintain an almost symbiotic relationship, based on trade. A Negro village may own approximately 100 square miles of forest territory. In this territory are the Negro village and the pygmy village. The former is permanent, in a clearing; the latter is temporary, under the forest trees. In maintaining their relationship, it is the pygmies' job to take in honey and meat, while the Negroes' obligation is to give them plantains. In addition, the pygmies may bring in a certain amount of wild baselli fruit in season, or roofing leaves, or rattan and fibers for net making; in return they may acquire ax blades, knives, and arrowheads from the Negroes.

There is no strict process of barter involved, and no accounting kept, other than through general observation. If the pygmies are stingy, their Negroes will hold back their bananas. If the Negroes are stingy, the pygmies will leave the territory and go to live with other pygmies serving other Negro hosts.

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This relationship is interfamilial, between a pygmy family and a Negro family. It is a matter of close personal relations, inherited, on both sides, from father to son. These alliances may change from time to time, but when they do there are usually hard feelings; if a man's pygmy leaves him to serve another host it is a kind of divorce. In the old days, a frequent cause of intervillage warfare among the Negroes was the luring away of each other's pygmies.

[P 323-A]